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AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

ACF

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM AT WORK

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APR 6 - 1963



ACP In Brief

Stable soil that resists erosion. Healthy stands of trees. Luxuriant growth on pasture and rangeland. Disposal of excess water or conservation of scarce water. Plentiful habitat for wildlife. And a beautiful countryside.

These are goals of the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), a joint effort by landowners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to preserve our Nation's land, water, and timber resources.

Significant progress has been made in natural resource conservation over the past 30 years. But a great deal of work remains. In fact, most of the Nation's privately owned land is not yet receiving adequate conservation treatment.

Conserving these resources is a big job—often too big and expensive for a farmer or rancher to accomplish on his own. Yet the job must be done if we are to provide food, fiber, water and shelter—the necessities of life—for this and future generations.

Under ACP, the Federal Government assists agricultural producers to combat their more pressing conservation problems by sharing the cost of performing needed conservation work on the land.

While the farmer or rancher bears the primary responsibility for conservation of the land, the public seeks to as-

Front cover—Rolling farmland is stripcropped on the contour to control wind or water erosion and as a means to conserve water.

Hereford steers graze on improved alfalfa-brome pasture. Wind or water erosion is no longer a problem on this farm.

sure itself that the Nation's natural resources will be available for productive use by future generations. That is why Congress has consistently determined that a portion of the cost of conservation practices shall be assumed by the general public.

This booklet describes ACP in general terms and identifies the types of conservation practices for which Federal assistance is offered.



How ACP Works

ACP functions on three levels—National, State and county. The National program sets forth broad guidelines and policies as authorized by Congress. This provides a framework for conservation leaders in each State to develop a program suited to State needs. The core of the ACP conservation effort, however, is at the county level where local people refine the program to cope with conservation problems peculiar to their area, and put it to work farm-by-farm.

The program is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, an agency of USDA. ACP funds, authorized annually by Congress, are allocated on the basis of conservation needs to State ASC committees. These committees, in turn, allocate funds to county ASC committees.

Specific State and county conservation programs are formulated by ACP Development Groups which include ASCS, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Forest Service, who work in consultation with other conservation interests. These interests include the Farmers Home Administration, land-grant colleges, agricultural extension services, soil conservation districts, State conservation commissions, wildlife conservation groups, and associations of farmer-elected committeemen.

A farmer or rancher whose land needs conservation work may request cost-sharing assistance from his county ASC committee. This locally elected farmer committee will evaluate his request, giving consideration to the overall conservation problems in the county, and the availability of funds. On certain practices, findings of technical agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service are utilized.

If the county committee approves the farmer's request, the Federal share of the cost will be paid if the practice is completed according to specifications and a report of performance and application for payment is filed within the prescribed time. Most cost-sharing is on a 50-50 basis but

this may vary among practices, different conditions, or the farmer's ability to contribute to the cost of performing needed practices.

Costs are shared with a farmer or rancher with the understanding that he must maintain the practice and use it for its conservation purpose for its normal life span. He is also responsible for obtaining any authorities, easements, or rights-of-way necessary to perform and maintain the practice in keeping with applicable laws and regulations. Detailed information on how ACP works is available at any ASCS county office.



This crop of grain sorghum, planted in strips on the contour, not only controls erosion but also provides an excellent wildlife habitat.

ACP Practices

ACP offers a wide range of conservation, soil, woodland, water and wildlife practices to meet the varied conservation problems throughout the nation. But since local ACP Development Groups determine which practices are available in their counties, requests for detailed information should be directed to your county ASCS office. Major categories of these practices are listed below.

1. Vegetative Cover Practices

Seedbed preparation, seeding, liming, fertilizing, and other measures needed in the establishment or improvement of grass and legume cover for soil protection.

2. Forestry Practices

The planting of trees and shrubs for forestry purposes and for erosion control, and the improvement of estab-



lished stands of trees by such measures as thinning, pruning, and the control of competing and undesirable vegetation.

3. Establishment of Conservation Systems of Farming

The construction of terraces and the performance of farming operations on the contour or in strips for the prevention of wind or water erosion.

4. Water Impoundment Practices

The construction of dams, pits, or ponds for erosion control, livestock water, irrigation, or other agricultural purposes.

5. Disposal of Excess Water

The construction of sod waterways and the installation of farmland drainage systems.

6. Conservation and More Effective Use of Water

The lining of irrigation ditches, leveling of land, and the installation of structures to conserve water, prevent erosion, and to permit more efficient use of irrigation water.

7. Wildlife Conservation Practices

The establishment of vegetative cover which will provide food, cover, and habitat for wildlife as well as soil protection, and the impoundment of water for fish and other wildlife.

8. Beautification—Conservation Practices

The performance of measures which will enhance the appearance of areas visible to the public and at the same time provide substantial soil and water conservation benefits.

This farm pond was built for livestock water and to solve an erosion problem. It is also a delightful place to fish and boat.

Annual Accomplishments Of Major ACP Practices

50,000 water storage reservoirs—Constructed to distribute grazing, control erosion, and conserve irrigation water or provide wildlife habitat.

734,000 acres terraced—to control erosion or conserve water.

345,000 acres established in stripcropping systems—To control wind or water erosion and conserve water.

43,000 acres of sod waterways—Established to control erosion and permit safe disposal of excess runoff.

12,708,000 acres established in enduring vegetative cover—To control erosion and conserve water.

200,000 acres planted to trees—For forestry purposes.

210,000 acres of low quality forested areas improved—To develop desirable forestry resources.

ISSUED JANUARY 1968